

**DRAFT**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

### **PART I. GAME FARM LICENSE APPLICATION**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Park's authority to regulate game farms is contained in sections 87-4-406 through 87-4-424, MCA and ARM 12.6.1501 through 12.6.1519.

1. Name of Project: Lake Koocanusa Elk Ranch

Application Date: 11/12/96; Received 11/21/96

2. Name, Address and Phone Number of Applicant(s): Carol Miller  
P.O. Box 41  
Rexford, MT 59930  
(406) 889-3809

3. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: 2/97

Estimated Completion Date: 4/97

Is this an application for expansion of existing facility or is a future expansion contemplated? New facility.

4. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township):

Lincoln County, R28W, T36N

5. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed:  
residential.....        acres  
industrial.....        acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Areas.....        acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas.....        acres

(d) Floodplain...        acres

(e) Productive:  
irrigated cropland.        acres  
dry cropland.....        acres  
forestry..... 70 acres  
rangeland.....        acres  
other.....        acres

**6. Map/site plan:** attach a copy of the map submitted with the application (an 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map) showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

See Attached.

**7. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action:**

Applicant proposes to raise and breed elk in captivity for profit by selling breeding stock and antler production. No more than 60 elk would be raised at the facility. The 70 acre proposed game farm would be constructed approximately 1/2 mile from the small community of Rexford. The perceived public benefits of the proposed game farm include increased revenue through taxes and increased income generated for the local economy.

Economic uses for the general area of the proposal is primarily timber production and tourism. Adjacent properties are either under Forest Service management or 40+ acre private parcels with the nearest neighboring residence > 600 yards from the proposed enclosure. Topographic relief is mild to moderate with the steepest slope in the project area 22%. Soils in the area are porous with very little run-off.

Existing habitat within the proposed enclosure is characterized as ephemeral grasslands with young, regenerating trees distributed throughout. The area was heavily logged 5 years ago and nearly all trees of commercial value were removed. Douglas-fir is the primary tree species present, with lesser amounts of larch. Few of the trees exceed 20' in height. The applicant has verbally stated plans to remove any taller trees near the fence perimeter to further reduce the potential of windthrow onto the fence. A 10' wide swath will be completely cleared both inside and outside the fence perimeter. Winds in the area are generally mild, rarely exceeding 20 mph.

Snow levels may reach 2.5 feet in the project area. Drifting may occur but is unlikely. A tractor mounted snowblower will be available to blow snow away from the fence both inside and outside the enclosure. The applicant has verbally stated that they plan to string 2 rows of electrified wire around the top of the 8' high "Solidlock" fence, essentially making the fence 10' high. An additional electrified wire will be strung around the base of the fence to further deter predators from crawling under. Although these and other features aren't required by FWP, the applicant wants to build a quality facility that can be used as a model for other elk breeders.

Originally, the 70 acres of enclosed area were to be separated into 2 pastures, each about 35 acres in size, with an 8' wide fenced corridor connecting them. The applicant has modified her original proposal so that the enclosure will now be separated by an 8 foot high interior fence with a gate at the east end of the fence. Water will be provided via an established well and the elk will be fed hay in addition to the native grasses. Until a permanent quarantine facility is built, an established facility at another game farm approximately 17 miles away will be used when necessary.

**8. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction:**

**(a) Permits:**

Agency Name                      Permit                      Date Filed/#

Department of Livestock

**(b) Funding:**

Agency Name                      Funding Amount

**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

Agency Name                      Type of Responsibility

Department of Livestock	Tagging, Quarantine, Inspections for Transport
Lincoln County Weed Control	Weed Control

**9. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

Department of Livestock  
Montana Historical Society

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

### **1. Evaluation of the Impacts of the Proposed Action Including Secondary and Cumulative Impacts on the Physical and Human Environment:**

#### **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

1. <b><u>LAND RESOURCES</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X			
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Other:						

#### **PROPOSED ACTION:**

1.b. An increase in compaction will result due to increased grazing levels. This could result in a decrease in productivity on the 70 acre parcel. Minor amounts of runoff could occur during the spring melting periods or after a heavy thunderstorm. However, runoff is not expected to be a problem due to the relatively gentle terrain throughout the area.

#### **NO ACTION:**

#### **COMMENTS:**

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. <u>AIR</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. Other:						

**PROPOSED ACTION:** No impact.

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:**

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. <u>WATER</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?	X					
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Violation of the Montana non-degradation statute?		X				
j. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
k. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
l. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
m. Other:						

### PROPOSED ACTION:

3.b. Due to compaction, a small amount of surface runoff may occur during the spring melting period or after a severe thunderstorm. However, the amount of runoff from this operation is expected to be very minor.

### NO ACTION:

### COMMENTS:

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species?			X			
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X			
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X			
f. Other:						

### PROPOSED ACTION:

4.a.b. Due to the compaction and the grazing of confined animals, changes in plant diversity and abundance on the 70 acre project are expected. With time, grass species composition will change and the coverage of shrubs and native forbs will probably diminish.

4.e. Due to soil compaction and the feeding of hay, noxious weeds on the site such as Canada Thistle and Spotted Knapweed could potentially increase over current levels. However, the operator already has an aggressive weed management program in place and has every intention to continue the management of weeds on the property.

### NO ACTION:

Denial of the permit will result in less soil compaction and a greater retention in the abundance and coverage of native forbs, grasses and shrubs. Over time, the vegetation will tend to return to previous forest conditions through natural succession.

### COMMENTS:

The site was heavily logged 5 years ago and is currently comprised primarily of native grasses and small trees (primarily Douglas-fir) < 6" diameter. With time, the forested nature of the site will increase, although species composition in the understory will probably reflect the effects of grazing by elk.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?			X			
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game species?			X			
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. Other:						

### PROPOSED ACTION:

1.a.b. The proposed action will remove 70 acres of habitat that is considered secondary winter range for white-tailed deer and elk. Other game species that may occasionally use the area seasonally or year-round include mule deer, black bears, mountain lion, moose, turkeys and ruffed grouse.

### NO ACTION:

Denial of the permit will not prevent native game animals from using the 70 acres of habitat.

### COMMENTS:

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish/Wildlife Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):



## PROVIDE NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION FOR THE FOLLOWING:

Wildlife use of the area and potential for through-the-fence contact with game farm animals (consider year-around use, traditional seasonal habitat use, and location of travel routes and migration corridors).

The project area is in secondary white-tailed deer and elk winter range. Mule deer, black bears, moose and mountain lions may occasionally use the area as well. Wild elk could be attracted to the site, especially when game farm cow elk are in estrous. Coyotes are common and could potentially make contact with captive elk. Through-the-fence contact may be rare, but could be expected between game farm animals and wild ungulates and/or predators.

Disease and parasite transmission can occur via nose-to-nose, nose-to-other body parts, nose-to-soil and vegetation along the fenceline. White-tailed deer, native elk, black bears, mule deer and coyotes may move along the fence perimeter. They could potentially come in contact with game farm elk food, feces, soil, or actual body parts.

The risk of through the fence contact can be reduced if: 1. salt, hay and feed are kept to the interior of the game farm and game farm animals are not fed along the fence perimeter; 2. if game farm operators use commonly accepted sanitation measures and remove excess feed, dead animals or other wildlife attractants to an area not accessible to wildlife; 3. a 10' wide area is kept free of trees and shrubs on both sides of the fence perimeter; 4. snow levels on both sides of the fence perimeter are not allowed to exceed 1' of firmly packed snow; and 5. the game farm operator patrols the fence perimeter daily to determine if the fence has been breached and any new potential exists for captive elk to escape or for wild animals to gain access to the game farm. If fence integrity appears to be a problem, additional fence requirements may be necessary.

Potential for escape of game farm animals or ingress of wildlife (consider site-specific factors that could reduce the effectiveness of perimeter fences built to standards outlined in Rule 12.6.1503A, including steepness of terrain, winter snow depths/drifts, susceptibility of fences to flood damage, etc.).

The 70 acre project area occurs on gentle to moderately sloping terrain in habitat that was formerly forested and is now in a regenerative state. Douglas-fir and larch are the primary species present and occur in heights of less than 20' and diameters of < 6" dbh. The applicant plans to remove any trees near the fence perimeter that could threaten fence integrity. A 10' swath will be completely cleared both inside and outside the fence perimeter. The removal of trees as described by the applicant will greatly decrease the chances of windthrow onto the fence. In addition, the applicant plans to install 2 electrified wires above the 8' high "Solidlock" fence and a single strand at its base to deter predators from climbing over or under the fence.

Snow levels may reach 2.5 feet in the project area. Drifting could potentially be a problem. However, the operator has ordered a blower attachment for her tractor that will allow her to blow snow away from the fence, both inside and outside the enclosure.

The terrain at the site of the proposed project consists of a series of gentle to moderate slopes and ridges. The steepest slope in the project area consists of a 22% grade.

Proportion (%) of the total habitat area currently used by wildlife that will be enclosed or otherwise impacted.

Displacement of Game Animals: The project area will displace white-tailed deer and possibly elk from 70 acres of existing secondary winter range habitat. Due to the removal of all thermal cover from logging 5 years ago, the value of this area for winter range is currently low to moderate. However, the value for winter range will increase as succession progresses. The impact of the proposed project may translate into removing winter habitat for 2-6 deer, assuming winter densities of 20-50 deer / mi.<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly, the proposed project will effectively remove 70 acres of occasional and year-round habitat for elk, black bears, mountain lions and moose. The proposed expansion will not block any significant migration corridors. The proportion of the total habitat area that will be enclosed is relatively minor.

**Displacement of Nongame Animals:** The project area may see a slight increase in the abundance of species often associated with livestock such as house sparrows, cowbirds, starlings, magpies and Columbian ground squirrels. Many forest edge species such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, western bluebirds, robins, kestrels and tree swallows which may already use the project area will continue. The abundance of some forest dwelling species such as woodpeckers and nuthatches will increase over time as the existing trees mature.

## **HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

6. <b><u>NOISE EFFECTS</u></b>	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	Will the proposed action result in:	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT	
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X			
c. Other:			X			

**PROPOSED ACTION:** No impact.

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:**

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects of Noise Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## **HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

7. <b>LAND USE</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Conflict with any existing land use that would be adversely affected by the proposed action?		X				
e. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
f. Other:						

**PROPOSED ACTION:** No impact.

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:**

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Risk of dispersal of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to chemicals, pathogens, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?				X	YES	8.a.
b. Creation of any hazard or potential hazard to domestic livestock?		X				
c. Creation of any hazard or potential hazard to human health?		X				
d. Other:						

### PROPOSED ACTION:

The potential risk is that if the game farm animals were to carry or become infected with a debilitating wildlife disease (such as tuberculosis or meningeal worm), that contact with wild animals (e.g. through-the-fence, nose-to-nose, nose-to-soil, escape, or ingress) could release this disease into wild animal populations.

### ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The potentially significant impacts of the proposed action can be mitigated through the measures listed below (see comments). By taking these actions, potentially significant impacts then become minor.

### NO ACTION:

Denial of the permit would deny the applicant the opportunity to raise game farm elk. It would also allow area wildlife an opportunity to use 70 acres of habitat that would otherwise be excluded to them.

### COMMENTS:

8.a. The following recommended game farm management practices will help to reduce ingress/egress or other contact with wild animals:

1. Removal of all trees and shrubs within 10' of the fence perimeter (both inside and out) to minimize windthrow, facilitate inspection and maintenance, and minimize potential for escape.
2. Storage of hay, feed and salt away from exterior fences and within enclosed containers and buildings. No feeding of game farm animals along the perimeter fence.
3. The use of generally accepted sanitation practices of removing dead animals, fecal material and waste feed to an area not used by humans, domestic animals or wild animals. Examples of suitable sites would be a landfill or burial within the enclosure.
4. The daily inspection of the entire fence perimeter to insure its integrity.
5. The removal of snow around the fence perimeter (both inside and out) so that the depth of firmly packed snow does not exceed 1'.

6. The immediate reporting of ingress of any wild game animals or predators or the escape of any game farm animals and the reason how or why the ingress or egress was achieved. This information will help both the applicant and FWP address such incidents and help insure that the contact between game farm and wild animals are eliminated or at least kept to a minimum.

7. If fence integrity or ingress becomes a problem, adjustments to fence requirements including double fencing, electrification, or increased height may become a necessary requirement.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Changes in historic or traditional recreational use of an area?		X				
f. Changes in existing public benefits provided by affected wildlife populations and wildlife habitats (educational, cultural or historic)?		X				
g. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
h. Other:						

**PROPOSED ACTION:** No impact.

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:**

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. A need for new or altered government services (specifically an increased regulatory role for FWP and Dept. of Livestock)?			X			
b. A change in the local or state tax base and revenues?			X			
c. A need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Other:						

### PROPOSED ACTION:

10.a. Approval of the project will result in a small increase in workload for local FWP employees due to periodic ( $\pm$  twice annually) fence inspections. Should problems with the facility arise, a substantial increase in workload by FWP and Department of Livestock could occur.

10.b. Approval of the project will result in a small increase to the local and state tax bases if the project is successful financially.

### NO ACTION:

Denial of the permit will not cause a slight increase in workload for FWP employees and will potentially deprive local and state governments a minor source of revenue via the tax base.

**COMMENTS:** Licensing of the game farm requires that FWP prepares an EA and conducts periodic inspections to assure compliance with regulations and rules. Partial mitigation for costs related to licensing and inspections will be covered by the game farm licensing fee.

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

Game farm operators are required to notify FWP to help recover escaped animals within a reasonable amount of time. FWP may be required to assist in the recovery or disposal of escaped animals, and FWP is responsible for overseeing the removal of wild game that gets inside a game farm. The necessity of destroying diseased animals could require a cost to the Department of Livestock and FWP.



## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings?		X				
d. Other:						

PROPOSED ACTION: No impact.

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS:

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12.a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. Other:						

### PROPOSED ACTION:

12.a. A letter from the State Historic Preservation Office states that 9 archaeological and 4 historic sites within Section 12 (T36N R28W) of the project location have been identified. They believed that because of the large number of sites identified for Section 12, that the project had a high probability for effecting unknown or unrecorded cultural properties through soil erosion, soil compaction, or new construction within the area of potential effect. It is important to note that while sites of archaeological and historical importance have been identified nearby, none have been specifically identified within the project area. However, the entire tract was surveyed prior to disposal from federal ownership and no sites were found. Therefore, it is unlikely that any significant archeological sites exist and no further survey work is needed.

### NO ACTION:

### COMMENTS:

12.a. Due to past logging, road construction, construction of dwellings and outbuildings and the construction and placement of utilities, most of the potential damage to the site has already occurred.

In December 1989 an archeological study was conducted by the Forest Service in relation to a land transfer. No sites of cultural significance were found during that study. A copy of this report is in the project file.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?				X	YES	13.b.
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements or any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?			X			
f. Other: Potential threat to sites of archaeological or historical significance.		X				

### PROPOSED ACTION:

13.b.e. As with almost every proposal involving game farm ranching of elk, one of the most controversial issues is that the fence will be breached and that game farm elk and wild game animals will interact, exposing wild game populations to disease.

### ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The potentially significant impacts of the proposed action can be mitigated through the measures listed below (see comments). By taking these actions, the potentially significant impacts then become minor.

### NO ACTION:

Denial of the permit would deny the applicant the opportunity to raise game farm elk. It would also allow area wildlife an opportunity to use 70 acres of habitat that would otherwise be excluded to them.

### COMMENTS:

1. The Licensee or Manager must report to FWP the ingress of any game animal or any predators of ungulates (e.g. mountain lion, black bear, grizzly bear, wolf or coyote) immediately upon the discovery, and the reason for such ingress.

2. All firmly packed snow greater than 1' in depth and within 10' of the fence perimeter (both inside and out) must be removed.

3. FWP reserves the right to require fence/gate modifications (such as, but not limited to, double fencing, electrical outriggers, or solid board panels) to those portions of fence when problems with tree or snag blowdowns occur that compromise fence integrity, or when the previously constructed fence may prove to be inadequate to prevent ingress or egress of game animals or game farm animals. In areas where slope steepness may be a problem, the relocation of a portion of the fence may become necessary.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (Continued)**

### **2. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

a. Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively considerable? (A project may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)

No.

b. Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?

Yes. The potential risk is that if game farm animals were to carry a debilitating wildlife disease such as tuberculosis or meningeal worm and then came into contact with wild animals, the disease could be spread into wild populations where it would be difficult to control or eliminate.

3. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action: Denial of the permit would deny the applicant the opportunity to raise game farm elk. It would also allow area wildlife an opportunity to use 70 acres of habitat that would otherwise be excluded to them.

Alternative Action: The potentially significant impacts of the proposed action can be mitigated through the measures listed below.

4. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

The risk of contact between game farm animals and wild animals should be reduced if the Licensee constructs all fences, quarantine and holding facilities according to the minimum standards as prescribed in ARM 12.6.1503A, 1509 and 1510. In addition:

1. The Licensee or Manager must report to FWP the ingress of any game animal or any predators of ungulates (e.g. mountain lion, black bear, grizzly bear, wolf or coyote) immediately upon the discovery, and the reason for such ingress.

2. All firmly packed snow greater than 1' in depth and within 10' of the fence perimeter (both inside and out) must be removed.

3. FWP reserves the right to require fence/gate modifications (such as, but not limited to, double fencing, electrical outriggers, or solid board panels) to those portions of fence when problems with tree or snag blowdowns occur that comprise fence integrity, or when the previously constructed fence may prove to be inadequate to prevent ingress or egress of game animals or game farm animals. In areas where slope steepness may be a problem, the relocation of a portion of the fence may become necessary.

### **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

A review of the license application and the elements of this environmental review indicate that the potential for conflict in the social and physical environments is moderate. By following all mitigative measures identified in this document, the potential for future problems are considerably reduced.

### **PART IV. EA CONCLUSION**

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO

No.

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

The scope of the proposed project is relatively small (70 acres and < 60 animals). Given the relatively small size of the project and FWP's belief that the threat of animals escaping, ingress and possible disease transmission can be reduced through prescribed mitigative measures to a level below significant impacts, an EIS is not required for this application.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances? (At a minimum, all EAs must be MADE available to the public through the State Bulletin Board System.)

Upon completion of the draft EA, a notice will be sent to adjoining landowners, the local newspapers, the State Bulletin Board, the Region News Release, and other

potentially affected interests. The notice will explain the project and request input during a 21 day comment period. Public comments will be received beginning April 3, 1997 and ending April 24, 1997.

**3. Duration of comment period if any: 21 days**

**4. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:**

Wildlife Biologist Tim Thier  
P.O. Box 507  
Trego, MT 59934  
ph. (406) 882-4697

Game Warden Jim Roberts  
75 Pings Rd.  
Eureka, MT 59917  
ph. (406) 889-3404

REF:MIL-EA.WPD  
04/03/97

GAFARMEA.FRM  
Rev. 12/95



(TRACT 1, COS 1829)  
(SW1/4SW1/4)

FOUND  
& CAR  
NORTH  
TRACT

1313.48 (R)  
N 0070414 W (R)

5 000104 E (R)  
1314.04 (R)

holding & working  
facility

B.L.M. ALUMINUM  
CAP PER COS

N 82°29'31" E (CALCULATED)  
417.24 (CALCULATED)

**PARGEL 1**  
2.00 ACRES

11

14

19

460.20

gate

**QUESTIONS**



**EDITION**  
in 1982

554.30



Handling & working  
Facility layout

